

Message Text

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TAGS: PGOV, BL

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS GUIDANCE ON BOLIVIA - JULY 24

1. THE FOLLOWING EXCHANGE TOOK PLACE DURING THE DEPARTMENT'S NOON PRESS BRIEFING ON JULY 24:

QUOTE: QUESTION. HODDING, BEFORE WE GET TO SOMETHING ELSE, DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT OR STATEMENT ON THE SITUATION OF WHAT HAPPENED TO THE ELECTIONS IN BOLIVIA, AND DOES THE QUESTION OF RECOGNITION ARISE HERE?

ANSWER: I DO HAVE A GENERAL STATEMENT ON BOLIVIA. WE PUT OUT SOME WORD, BUT IN RESPONSE TO A NUMBER OF QUERIES THAT WE GOT OVER THE WEEKEND.

I WANT TO SAY ON BEHALF OF THE DEPARTMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT WE DEEPLY REGRET THE DEVELOPMENTS IN BOLIVIA. THE BANZER REGIME WITH GENERAL PEREDA AS MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR HAD MADE PROGRESS IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD AND HAD PERMITTED AN OPEN ELECTORAL CAMPAIGN WHICH EXCITED POPULAR
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INTEREST.

UNFORTUNATELY WIDE-SPREAD CHARGES OF FRAUD ATTENDED THE VOTE COUNT FOLLOWING THE JULY 9 ELECTION. GENERAL PEREDA

HIMSELF, AS WELL AS THE LEADERS OF THE OPPOSITION PARTIES, ASKED FOR AN ANNULMENT OF THE ELECTIONS. THE ELECTORAL

COURT DID SO ON JULY 18, CALLING FOR NEW ELECTIONS IN SIX MONTHS. SUPPORTERS OF GENERAL PEREDA REFUSED TO ACCEPT THE COURT'S DECISION AND INITIATED AN UPRISING TO FORCE THE INSTALLATION OF PEREDA AS PRESIDENT.

ON JULY 21 PRESIDENT BANZER RESIGNED AND A MILITARY JUNTA TOOK OVER WHICH THE SAME DAY INSTALLED GENERAL PEREDA AS PRESIDENT.

THESE ACTIONS ARE CLEARLY A SERIOUS SET-BACK TO THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS WHICH SEEMED TO BE EVOLVING IN BOLIVIA. WE HOPE THE NEW REGIME WILL PRESERVE THE EARLIER GAINS IN INDIVIDUAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND MOVE QUICKLY TO RE-ESTABLISH A GENUINE PROCESS OF DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT THAT MEETS THE LEGITIMATE ASPIRATIONS OF THE BOLIVIAN PEOPLE.

WE ARE WITHHOLDING ANY JUDGMENTS ABOUT THE KINDS OF RELATIONSHIPS WE WOULD HOPE TO HAVE WITH THE NEW BOLIVIAN REGIME PENDING CLARIFICATION OF ITS INTENTIONS.

QUESTION. DOES THAT MEAN THAT RELATIONS ARE IN A STATE OF SUSPENSION, OR DOESN'T THAT MATTER ARISE HERE?

ANSWER. NO.

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WHAT I AM SAYING IS THAT, FRANKLY, PENDING CLARIFICATION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S INTENTIONS, OUR RELATIONSHIPS ARE UNDER REVIEW. THAT DOESN'T MEAN SUSPENSION OR ANYTHING OF THE SORT. END QUOTE.

2. POST, AT ITS DISCRETION, MAY WISH TO MAKE USE OF DEPARTMENT STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO INQUIRIES. VANCE

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